

VAN BUREN PUBLIC TRANSIT
VAN BUREN COUNTY MICHIGAN



LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

December 17, 2013

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Executive Order 13166	2
Plan Summary	2
Four Factor Analysis	2-3
Limited English Proficiency Plan Outline	4-7

Introduction

The purpose of this limited English proficiency policy guidance is to clarify the responsibilities of recipients of federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities to limited English proficient (LEP) persons, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and implementing regulations. It was prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq., and its implementing regulations providing that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance.

Executive Order 13166

Executive Order 13166 “Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency,” reprinted at 65 FR 50121 (August 16, 2000), directs each Federal agency that is subject to the requirements of Title VI to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying that obligation. Executive Order 13166 further directs that all such guidance documents be consistent with the compliance standards and framework detailed in the Department of Justice’s (DOJ’S) Policy Guidance entitled “Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil rights Act of 1964—National Origin Discrimination Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency.” (See 65 FR 50123, August 16, 2000 DOJ’S General LEP Guidance). Different treatment based upon a person’s inability to speak, read, write, or understand English may be a type of nation origin discrimination. Executive Order 13166 applies to all federal agencies and all programs and operations of entities that receive funding from the federal government, including state agencies, local agencies such as Van Buren Public Transit (VBPT) and governments, private and non-profit entities, and sub recipients.

Plan Summary

Van Buren Public Transit (VBPT) has developed this Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) to help identify reasonable steps to provide language assistance for LEP persons seeking meaningful access to VBPT services as required by Executive Order 13166. A Limited English Proficiency person is one who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

This plan details procedures on how to identify a person who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, training staff, how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available, and information for future plan updates.

In developing the plan while determining the VBPT’s extent of obligation to provide LEP services, VBPT undertook a U.S. Department of Transportation four factor LEP analysis which considers the following: 1) The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible in the VBPT service area who maybe served or likely to encounter an VBPT program, activity, or service; 2) The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with VBPT services; 3) The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by VBPT to the LEP population; 4) The resources available to VBPT and overall costs to provide LEP assistance. A brief description of these considerations is provided in the following section.

Four Factor Analyses

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible in the VBPT service area who maybe served or likely to encounter an VBPT program, activity, or service. The VBPT examined the US Census report from 2000 (none of the areas serviced by the VBPT were include in any of the Bureau’s American Community Surveys) and was able to determine that approximately 8.9%, or 6,323 people within VBPT’s service area age 5 and older spoke a language other than English. Of the 6,323 people reporting they speak other languages than English, 7% of respondents speak only Spanish.

2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with a VBPT program, active, or service.

The VBPT assesses the frequency at which staff and drivers have or could possibly have contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries and verbally surveying drivers. Since April 2008, the VBPT has had no requests for interpreters and zero requests for translated VBPT documents. The staff and drivers have had very little to no contact with LEP individuals.

3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the VBPT to LEP community. There is no large geographic concentration of any one type of LEP individuals in the VBPT service area. The overwhelming majority of the population, 91% or 63940, speak English as a first language. Therefore, there is a limited social, service, professional and leadership organization within the VBPT service area that focuses on outreach or membership of LEP individuals.

4. The resources available to the VBPT and overall costs The VBPT assessed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance. This included:

- Identifying how much a professional interpreter and translation service would cost on as needed basis
- Documents which would be the most valuable to be translated if and when the populations supports
- Taking an inventory of available organizations that the VBPT could partner with for outreach and translation efforts
- Level of staff training needed

After analyzing the four factors, the VBPT developed the plan outlined in the following section for assisting persons of limited English proficiency.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN OUTLINE

How to Identify an LEP Person who Needs Language Assistance

Below are tools to be used to help identify persons who may need language assistance:

- Examine records requests for language assistance from past meetings and events to anticipate the possible need for assistance at upcoming meetings;
- When VBPT sponsored workshops or conferences are held, set up a sign-in sheet table, have a staff member greet and briefly speak to each attendee. To informally gauge the attendee's ability to speak and understand English, ask a question that requires a full sentence reply;
- Have the Census Bureau's "I speak Cards" at the workshop or conference sign-in sheet table. While staff may not be able to provide translation assistance at this meeting, the cards are an excellent tool to identify language needs for future meetings. Also, have the cards available at the VBPT Center Customer Service Area; and
- Survey drivers and other first line staff on an annual basis at the beginning of each fiscal year regarding their experience on having any direct or indirect contact with LEP individuals.

Language Assistance Measures

The VBPT has or will implement the following LEP procedures. The creation of these steps are based on the very low percentage of persons speaking other languages or not speaking English at least "well," and the lack of resources available in the VBPT service area:

- Census Bureau's "I speak Cards" are to be located at the Customer Service window in the Transit Center at all times.
- The computer(s) located at the Customer Service Window in the Transit Center have Babel Fish translator added to the favorites listing for easy access via Microsoft Internet Explorer for the translations of blocks of texts. This will aid the VBPT staff in the interpretation of services on a one on one basis for LEP individuals visiting the VBPT Center.

- Van Buren Public Transit has a bilingual dispatcher fluent in Russian and basis Spanish.
- When an interpreter is needed, in person or on the telephone, and the VBPT staff has exhausted the above options, staff will first attempt to determine what language is required. When a Spanish interpreter is needed the Telamon Corporation @ 800 533 5800 will translate when available. Staff may also use the telephone interpreter service-Language Line Services at <http://www.language.com>. On the Language Line home page the staff will select the Need an Interpreter Now link and follow the directions to receive an access code.

VBPT Staff Training

All VBPT staff will be provided with the LEP Plan and will be educated on procedures to follow. This information will also be part of the VBPT staff orientation process for new hires. Training topics are listed below:

- Understanding the Title VI policy and LEP responsibilities;
- What language assistance services the VBPT offers;
- Use of LEP “I Speak Cards”;
- How to access Babel Fish via the Customer Service computer(s) in the VBPT Transit Center;
- How to use the On Call Language Line Interpretation and translation services;
- Telephone Documentation of language assistance requests;
- How to handle a Title VI and/or LEP complaint

Outreach Techniques

VBPT LEP Plan dated August 08, 2008; VBPT did not have a formal practice of outreach techniques due to the lack of LEP population and resources available in the service area. However, the following are a few options that the VBPT has incorporated when and/or if the need arises for LEP outreach:

- If staff knows that they will be presenting a topic that could be of potential importance to an LEP person or if staff will be hosting a meeting or a workshop in a geographic location with a known concentration of LEP persons, meeting notices, fliers, advertisements, and agendas will be printed in an alternative language, based on known LEP population in the area.

- When running a general public meeting notice, staff will insert the clause, based on the LEP population and when relevant, that translates into “A (insert alternative Language) translator will be available”. For example: “Un traductor del idioma español estará disponible” This means “A Spanish translator will be available”.
- Key print materials, including but limited to schedules and maps, will be translated and made available at the VBPT Center, on board vehicles and in communities when a specific and concentrated LEP population is identified.

Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan

This plan is designed to be flexible and is one that can be easily updated. At a minimum, the VBPT will follow the Title VI Program update schedule for the LEP Plan.

Each update will examine all plan components such as:

- How many LEP persons were encountered?
- Were their needs met?
- What is the current LEP population in VBPT service area?
- Has there been a change in the types of languages where translation services are needed?
- Is there still a need for continued language assistance for previously identified VBPT programs? Are there other programs that should be included?
- Has VBPT fulfilled the goals of the LEP Plan? and
- Were any complaints received?

Dissemination of the VBPT Limited English Proficiency Plan

The VBPT includes the LEP plan on the VBPT website <http://www.vbco.org/pages5365636.asp> together with its Title IV Policy and Complaint Procedures. The VBPT's Notice of Rights under Title VI to the public posted in the VBPT Center, on all VBPT vehicles, and in selected printed materials also refers to the LEP Plan's availability.

Any person, including social service, non-profit, and law enforcement agencies and other community partners with internet access will be able to access the plan.

Copies of the LEP Plan will be provided, on request, to any person(s) requesting the document via phone, in person, by mail or email. LEP persons may obtain copies/translations of the plan upon request.

Any questions or comments regarding this plan should be directed to the VBPT Title VI Coordinator.

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Projected future costs

Van Buren County's LEP population is in urgent need of dependable affordable transportation. Van Buren County residents have given the go ahead to increasing and providing a well balanced service to its population. VBPT is committed to breaking down the barriers alienating pockets of residents due to circumstances beyond their control. Language proficiency may be the single largest detractor from our service.

Van Buren Transit has determined the costs associated with the enhancement and development plan (Spanish speaking) for the future.

Radio marketing, development, production, air time	\$18000
Print advertising, La Opinion newspaper	\$5000
Develop a Spanish language brochure and fare list	\$1000 completed
Print 10,000 full color brochures	\$1537 completed
Full time bilingual dispatchers/ reservationists	\$51,200
Language training for additional staff	\$2000
Contingency @ 10%	<u>\$7874</u>
Total estimated projection to initiate program	\$86,611